

Four New Symbols Introduced by the 94th General Assembly

THE STATE GAME BIRD

The bobwhite quail (*Colinus virginianus*), also known as the northern bobwhite, is the official state game bird. The northern bobwhite is found throughout Missouri in a variety of habitats. In the fall and winter, northern bobwhites form loose social groups better known as a covey. A covey will generally contain ten to twelve quail, but can have as many as twenty or thirty birds. The familiar two- or three-note "bobwhite" whistle is made by males in the spring and summer to attract females. (RSMo 10.012).



THE STATE GRASS

Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) was designated as Missouri's state-grass on June 11, 2007 as a result of efforts by the Fourth Grade class at Truman Elementary School in Rolla. Big bluestem is native to Missouri and occurs throughout the state, with the exception of a few southeastern-most counties. It is a major component of Missouri's tallgrass prairies where it impressed the first explorers by sometimes growing tall enough to hide a person on horseback. The name "bluestem" comes from the bluish-green color of the leaves and stems that turn an attractive reddish-copper color in autumn. (RSMo 10.150).

THE STATE INVERTEBRATE

On June 21, 2007, the crayfish (also known as crawfish and crawdad) became the official state invertebrate. Crayfish are an important food source for Missouri fishes. Missouri supports more than 30 species of crayfish (including seven species that occur nowhere else in the world). Crayfish are found in every county of the state and contribute to our unique biodiversity and conservation heritage. The nomination of crayfish for state invertebrate came from Mrs. Janna Elfrink's elementary school class in Reeds Spring, Missouri. (RSMo 10.125)



THE STATE REPTILE

On June 21, 2007, the three-toed box turtle (*Terrapene carolina triunguis*) became the official state reptile. Most Missourians are familiar with this land-dwelling turtle. Three-toed box turtles, as their name implies, typically have three hind toes. The hinged bottom shell allows the turtle to retreat inside as if enclosed in a box. Males have red eyes and females have brown eyes. (RSMo 10.175).